

Department Heads Council (DHC)

Meeting of March 31, 2009

Odum Library 1604

Members in Attendance: Bob Bauer (Psychology & Counseling), Jim Baxter (Chemistry), Michael Capece (Sociology, Anthropology & Criminal Justice with Marriage & Family Therapy), Fred Downing (Philosophy & Religious Studies), Bob Gannon (Biology), Phyllis Holland (Management), Jim Peterson (Political Science), Paul Riggs (History), Mark Smith (English), Viki Soady (Modern/Classical Languages), Len Weld (Accounting & Finance)

Guests:

Dr. Louis Levy, Provost

Mr. Greg Gordon, Associate Director, Physical Plant

Dr. Smith, DHC Chair, opened the meeting at 4:02 pm. He introduced Dr. Levy for remarks on the budget. Dr. Levy commented upon the positive administrative evaluations that department heads had recently received and expressed his gratitude for their work. He spoke briefly about several controversial items that had received some consideration in the Georgia General Assembly in recent weeks. They pertained to the retirement system and to construction projects. He then credited the Chancellor of the University System of Georgia for his resistance to furloughs for personnel within the system. Dr. Levy further noted that the total budget cut for this fiscal year had been 12%. He was heartened that the Obama education plan had assisted the University System in its ability to restore full formula funding for the year. He was also optimistic about the fact that the current enrollment model in use enables more precise income estimates for the next year. This will be the first time that such a linkage was possible. Dr. Levy also reported that money had been released for the thirty-four full-time temporary faculty members whose status for next year had been uncertain. He also mentioned that the normal promotion increments had been incorporated into the budget as well. He expected that there would also be a release of some money for equipment and classroom renovation. Finally, he made extended comments about the need to link the strategic plan to the budget in a predictive way. Both factors would then flow into estimates about future enrollment patterns.

In response to questions, Dr. Levy further commented that other methods existed for heads to consider in meeting fall staffing needs. They included use of part-time instructors, assignment of overloads to regular faculty members, and close scrutiny of low-enrolled upper-division classes. He also responded positively to the idea of putting out a collective VSU ad locally that would highlight the needs of selected departments for part-time instructors.

Dr. Smith then introduced Mr. Greg Gordon. Mr. Gordon commented that there had been considerable attrition in Physical Plant personnel due to budgetary cuts. However, he underlined

the fact that customer service was still the highest priority. He encouraged department heads to use the electronic system for placing work orders, but he also stressed that phone calls will still work. He encouraged the heads to be patient and understand that Physical Plant management needed time both to handle emergencies and also to interface carefully with the technicians who actually do the work. In response to questions, he noted that Ashley Hall renovation has not yet been scheduled, that the inability to assign overtime sometimes slows responses to requests, and that there have been many cutbacks already in services such as those connected with landscaping.

Dr. Smith then concluded the meeting with a few additional items. He called for reactions to the minutes, and they were approved by acclamation. He encouraged department heads to let him know if they wanted to take part in the general ad for part-time instructors. He announced that the next DHC meeting would be on April 28 and that elections would take place at that time. He adjourned the meeting at 5:07 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Peterson, Recording Secretary